

**HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
CITY LANDMARK DESIGNATION
STAFF REPORT**

**TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH
1500 STATE STREET
SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA
APN 029-232-008**

Background:

One of Santa Barbara's most distinctive buildings is the beautiful Trinity Episcopal Church sheathed in Santa Barbara, ashlar cut sandstone. Philip Hubert Frohman and Harold Martin of Pasadena designed Trinity Episcopal Church in the Gothic Revival style in 1912. The church consecrated the completed building in 1919. Nationally recognized architect, Philip Hubert Frohman, designed over 50 churches of which Trinity Episcopal Church in Santa Barbara was his first Gothic Revival style structure. Frohman is most known for being the supervising architect of the Washington National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. The structure is load-bearing stone with a steel reinforced mortar and rubble core. The arches, window casements, and decorative elements are cast stone with ashlar cut, rough face sandstone as the wall infill. Many of Santa Barbara's best stone masons worked on the church under the direction of master stonemason Peter Poole.

The Historic Landmarks Commission designated the church a Structure of Merit on February 27, 1991. Because the church is Santa Barbara's only stone, Gothic Revival style building designed by a nationally important architect, the building meets the City Landmark eligibility criteria for its architectural style and historical significance. It is the opinion of the Historic Landmarks Commission Designation Subcommittee that the building is an excellent candidate for elevation from a Structure of Merit to a City Landmark.

The Vestry of Trinity Episcopal Church submitted a letter supporting the designation of the church. The proposed boundary of the City Landmark designation includes the entire parcel.



***Above:** View of the State Street elevation of the Frohman-designed building, featuring the intricate stone tracery in the windows and s of the tower that dominate this corner. September 12, 2018.*

1926 Parish Hall

2003 Labyrinth



The building sits on the corner of State and Micheltorena Streets. Red line indicates proposed boundary of the City Landmark designation, which includes the entire parcel including the stone parish hall.

1951 Church School

1912-1919 Sanctuary

Historic Context:

The history below is a summary of the detailed article by Michael Redmon published in the *Santa Barbara Independent* in 2012. Founded in 1866, the Episcopal congregation was the second Protestant denomination in Santa Barbara. There was no call for Protestant churches in the Spanish and Mexican eras when the population was united in the Roman Catholic faith. The few Americans that settled in Santa Barbara converted to Catholicism if they wished to marry or own land. In the 1850s, the Protestant population grew slowly after the Gold Rush and California Statehood. Parishioner Dr. Samuel Brinkerhoff donated the lot for the first Trinity church constructed for the congregation on the first block of East Gutierrez. However, when the Southern Pacific railroad ran the train tracks down the middle of Gutierrez in 1887, the noise, dust, and smoke convinced parishioners to relocate the church. A new redwood church with a 120-foot steeple arose at the corner of East Anacapa and Anapamu Streets. Unfortunately, fire destroyed the church on December 20, 1903. The church completed fundraising the \$54,000 dollars toward the new church in 1912. The location of the new church was on the prominent corner of State and Micheltorena Streets where the elegant tower rises over the corner and the lace tracery stained glass window looks out State Street. The arches, window casements, and decorative elements are cast stone with ashlar cut, rough face, sandstone as the wall infill. Old growth, redwood of substantial sizes frames the “roman tile” terra-cotta roof similar to those of Southern England.

The use of masonry for construction in the Santa Barbara area dates back to the time the Spanish arrived. Since it was necessary to travel some distance into the woods to obtain lumber, stone became the preferred building material. This method of construction was often chosen because local, brown sandstone was readily available and easily transformed from round or shapeless boulders into symmetrical, smooth-faced stone for building purposes. Stones were cut and incorporated into the original Santa Barbara Mission structures, although most of the early buildings and walls of the Mission were made of adobe. After the Mission was badly damaged in the earthquake of 1812, thick walls of sandstone were incorporated into the towers.

In the years from 1870 to 1940, when Santa Barbara was quickly evolving into a vibrant, growing city, the period witnessed an extraordinary explosion of stone



Photo of the 1887 Redwood Church destroyed by fire in 1903. Courtesy of The Santa Barbara Historical Society.

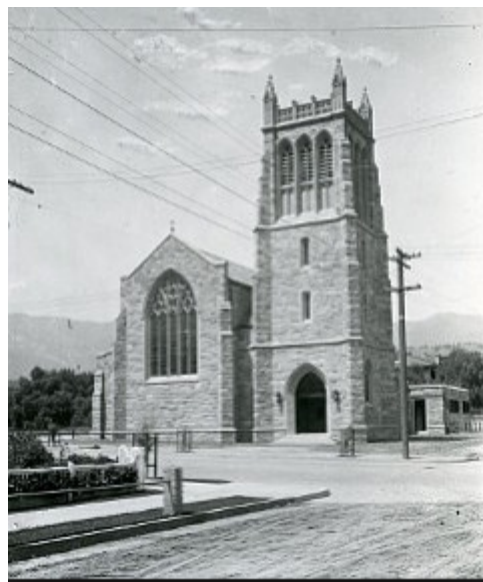


Photo of the existing Trinity Episcopal Church just after completion in 1919. Courtesy of The Santa Barbara Historical Society.

construction made possible by the abundant supply of sandstone, cadre of expert masons, and financing by private citizens. This period provided an atmosphere conducive to the building of public and private spaces of all kinds: bridges, walls, gardens, and an assortment of other stone works; and encouraged some exceptional expressions of the masons' art. In the early 1900s, as Santa Barbara was developing this important infrastructure, masons took advantage of the opportunity to display a variety of styles and approaches. In doing so, they created and maintained a high standard for excellence in stonework, one that has lasted over a century.

As stated by Michael Redmond in his article "The Craft of Stone Masonry in Santa Barbara. Churches, Bridges, Gates and Walls Reveal the Masons' Skill." published in the *Santa Barbara Independent*, "Beginning in the 1870s, the first group of masons to work in Santa Barbara came from a variety of national origins, including England, Scotland, Germany, France, Italy, and Mexico. The "golden age" of local stone masonry began in the 1870s with the arrival of a number of artisans from the British Isles. Most of these worked in the classic British style of cutting rectangular stones and laying them in parallel, often offset rows. In the last decades of the 19th century, these British transplants filled Santa Barbara with magnificent stone buildings. Unfortunately, many did not survive the 1925 earthquake. The stone Trinity Episcopal Church, the work of master stone mason Peter Poole, did survive the earthquake, although not without heavy damage". Peter Poole, a local master mason, built much of the sandstone infrastructure of Santa Barbara. The next generation of masons consisted primarily of Italians, particularly from the Lake Como region. This generation was followed by an influx of skilled stonemasons from Mexico, who continued to add to the varieties of stonework in the region. Each group of stone builders has added a distinctive touch to the tradition of stonework and contributed their own elements to the particular ambience that helps make Santa Barbara a special place.

The earthquake on June 29, 1925 caused the east and west gables of the church to cave and demolished the tower. Architect Frohman, who was by then in Washington, D.C. supervising the



Above: Micheltorena Street elevation in 1912. Photo taken September 12, 2018



Above: Courtyard formed by "L" shape with the 1926 Parish Hall and the long sanctuary. The setback second story features Tudor style barge boards. Photo taken September 12, 2018

Washington National Cathedral, returned to this project to rebuilding the west front and tower and revised plans to install earthquake-resisting steel reinforcements.

The oldest stained glass window in the church is the large window facing State Street. American Art Glass of Los Angeles fabricated the centurion glass window and the glazing indicates the artists' prior work with Tiffany Studios. Judson Studios of Los Angeles fabricated the remainder of the windows and represent installations from construction through the 1960s.

In the meantime, the church completed construction of the Parish Hall in 1926. Noted local architects, Soule Murphy and Hastings designed the Parish Hall in the half timbered Tudor style compatible with the sanctuary. The church completed the reconstruction of the sanctuary in 1927 for \$83,000. The congregation added a small chapel in 1932. The congregation added the church school building in 1951. Architect William R. LaVoie designed the labyrinth in the courtyard in 2003.

Architect Philip Hubert Frohman

A specialist in church architecture, Frohman also designed church organs and invented electric organs and various apparatus for the electrical reproductions of musical sounds.

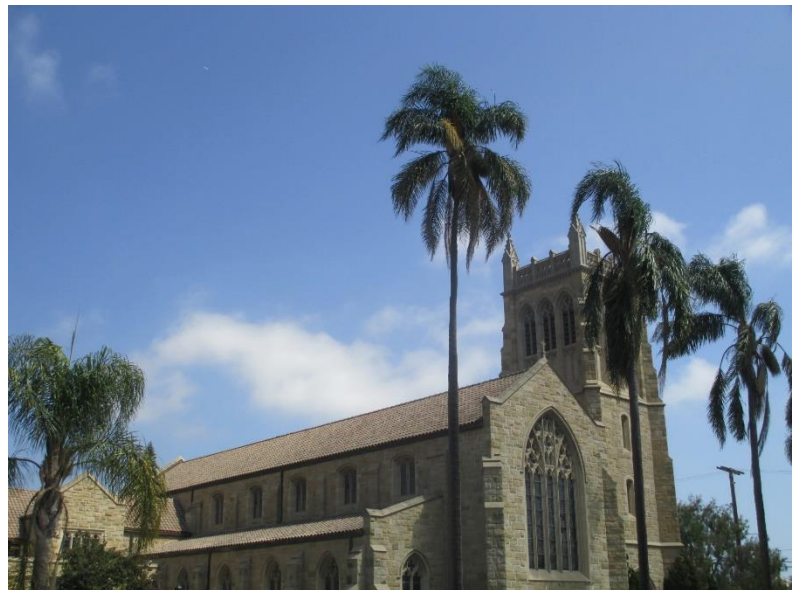
He was born in New York on Nov. 16, 1887. A graduate of the California Institute of Technology in 1907, Frohman began as an architect in Pasadena in 1908. He was a member of the firm of Frohman & Martin from 1909 to 1917.

In World War I, Frohman served in the ordnance construction section of the Army and designed buildings at Rock Island Arsenal and Aberdeen Proving Grounds, where he had charge of the architectural division.

After the war, he moved to Boston, where he was a partner in Frohman, Robb & Little from 1920 to 1934. After 1934, Frohman practiced alone without a partner.



Photo of the Trinity Episcopal Church with English Ivy crawling on the stone. The church removed the ivy in the early 1950s for re-pointing of the mortar. Courtesy of The Santa Barbara Historical Society.



Above: State Street elevation showing the long nave of windows facing the courtyard. Photo taken September 12, 2018

In 1921, Frohman became supervising architect of the Washington National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. He planned, designed, and supervised construction for more than 50 years. The Washington National Cathedral overlooks the capital from the top of Mount Saint Alban and serves as a national church for quasi official religious services. The workers completed the construction of the Cathedral after the death of Frohman in 1990.

In addition to Santa Barbara's Trinity Episcopal Church, Frohman designed approximately 50 churches, among them the Episcopal Cathedral of Baltimore, the Roman Catholic Cathedral of Los Angeles, and the Trinity College Chapel in Hartford. In Washington, D.C., he designed the Roman Catholic Church of the Annunciation, Wesley Methodist Church, and St. Paul's Lutheran Church.

Frohman received the Medal Pro Ecclesia and Pontifice from Pope John XXIII. He was a member of the Washington Archdiocesan Commission on Sacred Art, American Institute of Architects, National Cathedral Association, Guild of Religious Architecture, Liturgical Art Society, Restorers of Mount Carmel in Maryland, and American Ordnance Association. Frohman held that "an architect cannot master his profession as a fine art unless he is also a master builder, able to use builder's tools, to superintend construction, and is physically fit to climb scaffolds and ladders."

Widely regarded as an authority on Gothic architecture he is quoted saying: "Whether it is a chapel, small church or great cathedral or any portion thereof, we should endeavor to enclose space in a manner which will suggest the infinite."



Above: Intricate cast stone tracery in the tower featuring tri- and quarto foils in the Gothic pointed arch openings and delicate designs in the crenellations on the tower. Photo taken September 12, 2018

Architectural Firm of Soule, Murphy and Hastings

Architectural Firm of Soule, Murphy and Hastings (1921-1926) designed the Parish Hall in 1925. The firm is one of the Santa Barbara region's most noted architectural firms in the early twentieth century. Winsor Soule, who was in practice in California between 1917 and his death in 1954, headed a firm whose members included, at various times, Russell Ray, John Murphy, and Henry Hastings, all of whom became significant architects in their own right. Moreover, the firm played an important role in developing a regional architectural style for California inspired by the state's colonial period missions and Spanish and Italian Mediterranean antecedents. Because the firm made such significant contributions to the architectural heritage of Santa Barbara, their legacy lies in the firm's concerted effort to make Mediterranean and Spanish Colonial Revival the city's dominant architectural styles at a time when these regional styles were achieving great popularity.

Gothic Revival Style.

Gothic style architecture flourished in Europe during the High and Late Middle Ages evolving from Romanesque architecture. Originating in 12th-century France, it was widely used, especially for cathedrals and churches, until the 16th century. A Gothic revival began in mid-18th-century England, spread through Europe and the United States in the 19th century and continued, largely for ecclesiastical and university structures, into the 20th century. The Gothic Revival was to remain one of the most potent and long-lived of the 19th-century revival styles. Only when new materials and concern for functionalism began to take hold did the Gothic Revival disappear.

Trinity Episcopal Church has the following character-defining features of the Gothic Revival Style features are extensive in Gothic architecture to make buildings taller, lighter and stronger than their Romanesque predecessors:

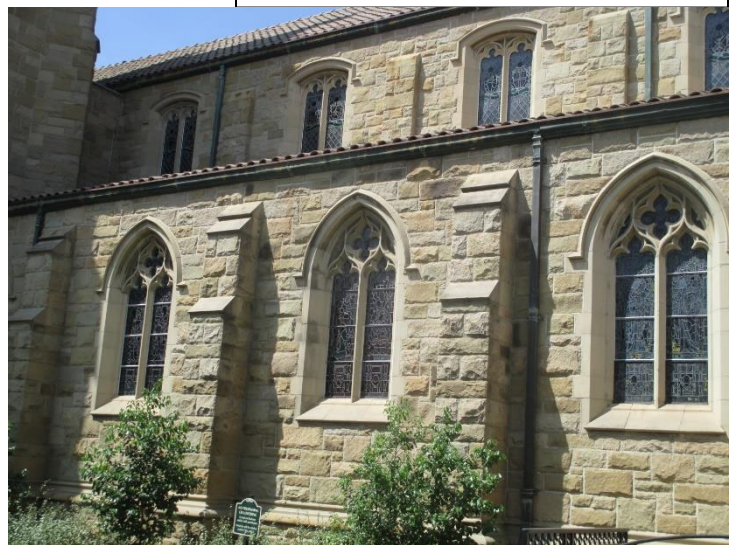
- Pointed arches
- Entrance in the tower under a pointed arch with leaded glass transom
- Tower topped with detailed stone ornament
- Tall, long gable roof along the nave
- A skeleton of stonework with great big glass windows in between.
- Cast stone, trefoil and quatrefoil tracery in the windows
- Extensive, richly colored stained glass in the windows
- Narrow, stepped stone buttresses, flank the building allowing the buttresses to counterbalance the weight of the high, long roof of the nave.

Significance:

The City of Santa Barbara defines historic significance as outlined by the Municipal Code, Section 22.22.040. It is the opinion of the Historic Landmarks



Above: 1912 Original drawing for the tower details.



Above: Buttresses and stained glass windows on the Micheltorena Street elevation echoing the trefoil and quatrefoil tracery in the tower openings. Photo taken September 12, 2018

Commission Designations Subcommittee that Trinity Episcopal Church is an excellent candidate for City Landmark designation per the following six criteria:

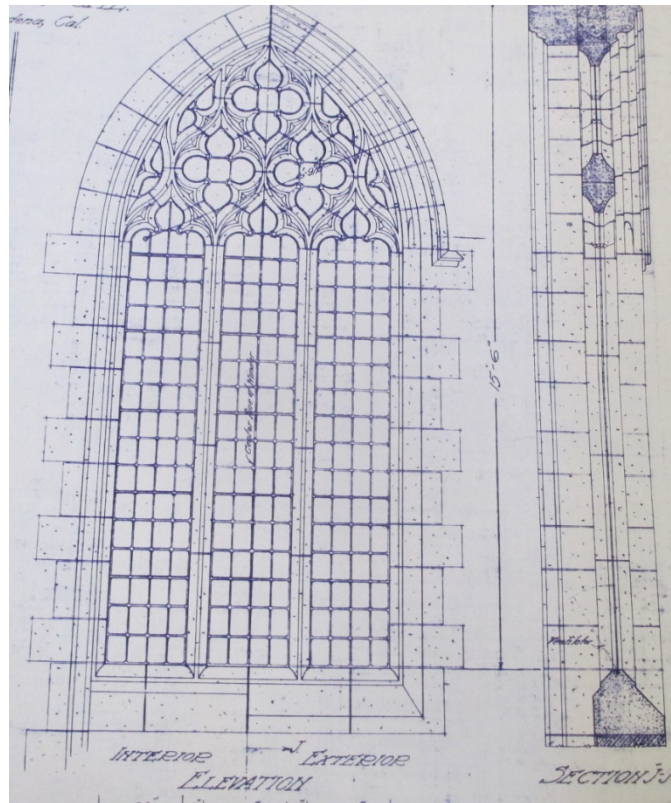
Criterion A. Its character, interest, or value as a significant part of the heritage of the City, the State or the Nation

Because the 1912 Trinity Episcopal Church represents an example of the work of nationally recognized architect Philip Hubert Frohman, and is the only Gothic Revival style, sandstone church in Santa Barbara, the building's character is a significant part of the heritage of Santa Barbara.

Criterion D. Its exemplification of a particular architectural style or way of life important to the City, the State, or the Nation.

The building is an exemplification of the Gothic Revival style, which is an important architectural style of Santa Barbara. The architectural elements of the church suggest the building was inspired by Gothic buildings constructed between the Norman conquest completion of the Tudor period. The building has the following character-defining features of the style: pointed, arched windows with cast stone tracery and stained glass; entrance in the tower under a pointed arch with leaded glass transom; tower topped with detailed cast stone ornament; tall, long gable roof over the nave; skeleton of stonework with great big glass windows in between; narrow, stepped stone buttresses flanking the building allowing the buttresses to counterbalance the weight of the high, long roof of the nave.

The building is important to the City as it is one of the few buildings in the city of Gothic Revival style constructed of stone and it is important to the development of Santa Barbara's architectural repertoire.



Above: 1912 Drawing of the intricate window with lace stone tracery.



Above: Cast stone tracery surrounding leaded glass windows. Photo taken September 12, 2018

Criterion E: Its exemplification of the best remaining architectural type in a neighborhood

Because the Trinity Episcopal Church is one of the only buildings in Santa Barbara that exemplifies a sandstone Gothic Revival style, it is the best remaining architectural type in the neighborhood.

Criterion F. Its identification as the creation, design, or work of a person or persons whose effort has significantly influenced the heritage of the City, the State, or the Nation:

The building represents an example of the work of Philip Hubert Frohman, an important architect of ecclesiastical architecture, including the Washington National Cathedral. Trinity Episcopal Church is an exemplary representation of the work of Philip Hubert Frohman, whose work has significantly influenced the heritage of Santa Barbara and California.

The 1925 Parish Hall is an example of the work of Soule, Murphy and Hastings, one of the leading interpreters of the Period Revival movement in the Santa Barbara region between 1921 and 1926.

The mason of the church was Peter Poole, a local master mason who built much of the sandstone infrastructure of Santa Barbara and whose stonework has significantly influenced the heritage of the City.

Criterion G. Its embodiment of elements demonstrating outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials, and craftsmanship

The building demonstrates outstanding materials in the cast stone (cast concrete) arches, window casements, tracery in the windows and decorative ornament crowning the tower with ashlar cut, rough face, sandstone as the wall infill. Old growth, redwood of substantial size frames the “roman tile” terra-cotta roof, similar to those of Southern England. In addition, the extreme attention to detail, materials, and craftsmanship in the intricate stained glass qualify this building as a under criterion G.

Criterion I. Its unique location or singular physical characteristic representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood



Above: Entrance in the tower under a pointed cast stone arch with leaded glass transom. Photo taken September 12, 2018

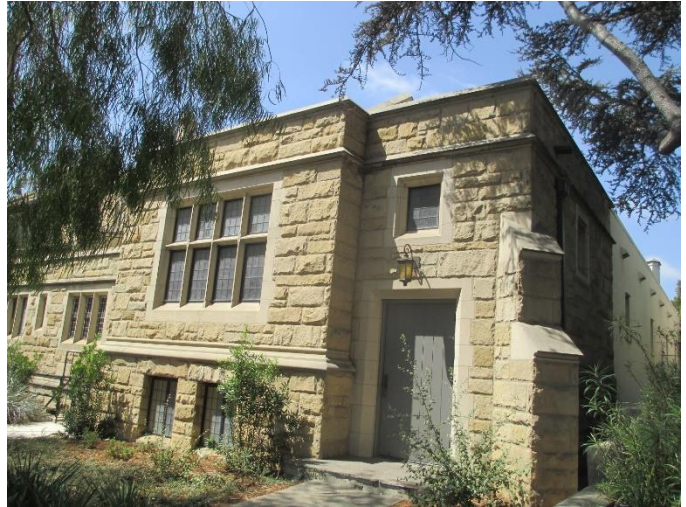


Above: Cast stone surrounds the wood doors of the entrance to the Parish Hall. Photo taken September 12, 2018

The grand stone church towered over this corner of State Street for over 100 years and its unique sandstone Gothic Revival edifice represents an established and familiar feature of the Downtown's prominent corner of Santa Barbara.

Historical Integrity:

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its original appearance. There are essential physical features that must be considered to evaluate the integrity of a significant building. Since its completion in 1919, the building's location, setting, association, and feeling have not changed. The church retains its original design, materials, and workmanship so that the building conveys its original 1919 appearance and intent of the original architects. Thus, the building has retained a high level of historical integrity.



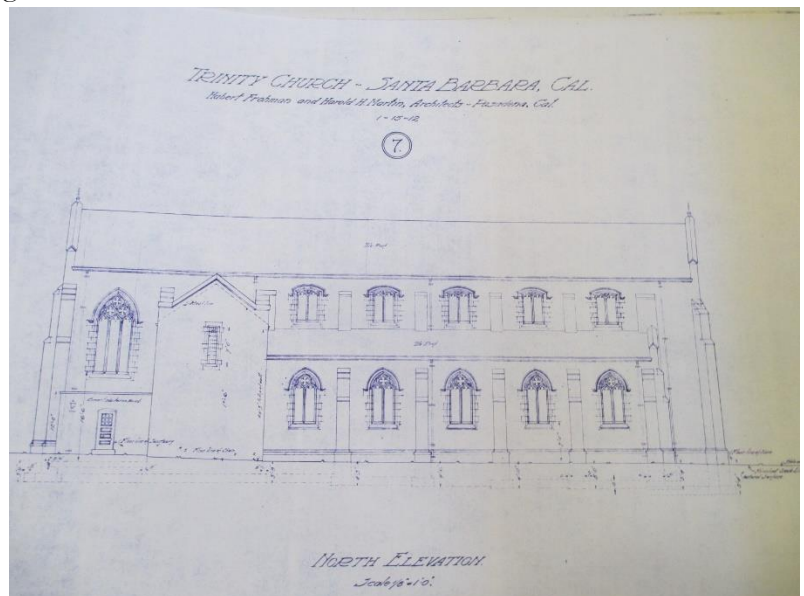
Above: Church School constructed in 1951. Photo taken September 12, 2018

Recommendation:

The HLC Designation Subcommittee recommends that the HLC adopt a resolution recommending that City Council designate the Trinity Episcopal Church building as a City Landmark. Staff recommends the proposed boundary of the City Landmark designation be the entire parcel.

Works Cited:

Obituary "Philip Hubert Frohman Dies; Designed National Cathedral." *New York Times*. October 31, 1972, Page 48. Web: September 11, 2018



Above: 1912 Original drawing of the north elevation of the church.

Redmon, Michael. "The Craft of Stone Masonry in Santa Barbara. Churches, Bridges, Gates and Walls Reveal the Masons' Skill." *Santa Barbara Independent*. Thursday, June 15, 2017

Redmon, Michael. "Trinity Episcopal Church Origins. It's Building a Triumph of the Spirit and Faith." *Santa Barbara Independent*. November 3, 2009. Web: May 16, 2017.

Santa Barbara Conservancy, *Images of America, Stone Architecture in Santa Barbara*. Arcadia Publishing, 2009.